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Revisiting the English-Swahili debate on Tanzania's medium of instruction policy at secondary and post-secondary levels of education

GASTOR C. MAPUNDA

University of Dar es Saalam
mapundag@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Like in other African countries, in Tanzania the debate on the medium of instruction has focused on the use of either English or Swahili in secondary and post-secondary education. During British colonialism, the focus of the debate was on ethnic languages, Swahili and English at primary level of education. Swahili was used in lower primary education and English in upper primary, middle, and in secondary education. After independence, pedagogical-cum-nationalist opinions wanted a complete changeover from English to Swahili. In 1967 Swahili replaced English in primary education, and speaking English in public was frowned on. Consequently, mastery of English declined. Swahili was also to replace English in secondary and post-secondary education, but it has not happened until now. Whilst it is true that most children have not mastered English to be able to use it comfortably in their studies, similar problems apply to children in remote rural Tanzania who have not mastered Swahili, especially in beginner classes at the primary level of education. Yet, the problem with Swahili and ethnic languages is never seriously debated. Nevertheless, English still commands symbolic and material value. Using a translanguaging perspective, we find that the merits of English in education outshine its demerits. It is recommended that the debate take a pragmatic-cum-utilitarian angle that multilingualism can unlock opportunities for learners.

KEY WORDS: medium of instruction policy, Tanzania, Swahili, trans-languaging perspective, monolingual practices

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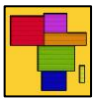


1. Introduction

The decision as to which language should be used in a country's education system should not be based solely on past histories, nationalist or patriotic aspirations, and pronouncements. The debate on whether or not Swahili should replace English in the Tanzania's secondary and post-secondary education is a clear illustration of medium of instruction (MoI) decision debates. Debates on MoI decisions are also common in other parts of the post-colonial nations, including South Africa, Zimbabwe, etc. (HUNGWE 2007, PROBYN 2009, BRISTOWE, OOSTENDORP and ANTHONISSEN 2014). This article revisits the debate on whether Swahili should replace English in Tanzania's secondary and post-secondary education system, a debate that has been there for more than five decades now. Nevertheless, it is important to still talk about it now because the pressure to change from English to Swahili medium is resurfacing, now that Swahili is gaining more international acknowledgement, such as by UNESCO (2021) (and by the African Union). The study sets out to address two main questions: (i) Why has there been a feeling that Swahili needs to replace English in education? (ii) Why is changeover from English to Swahili taking so long? The rest of the chapter is devoted to answering these two questions in detail.

As early as 1907, when what is now Tanzania was part of *Deutsch-Ostafrika* (German East Africa), the colonial authority was under pressure by the Asian community who wanted only Arabic and English to be used as media of instruction (MoI) in education (CAMERON and DODD 1970: 75). The Government did not yield to the pressure, and opted for Swahili instead. At that time, the suggestion to use English was facilitated by the presence of a sizeable number of Asians. The debate re-emerged also during the British colonial rule, as to which among the ethnic languages, Swahili or English should be used as the MoI (CAMERON and DODD 1970, BARRETT 2014). The Phelps-Stokes Commission's report of 1924 recommended the use of ethnic languages in primary school because education was to be adapted to the context and needs of the communities it served (CAMERON and DODD 1970: 134). The argument was that most communities did not know Swahili or English, but only their own ethnic language. Nevertheless, the British continued to use Swahili in the first five years of primary education as the MoI, and switched to English in the last three years, and throughout secondary education (BARRETT 2014: 4).

Those who have generally taken part in the Tanzania's language-in-education debate on Tanzania (including linguists, educationists, politicians, and the general public) have based their arguments on the relative benefits of using either English or Swahili in the country's education system (e.g. MEKACHA 1994, Roy-CAMPBELL and QORRO 1997, KAPOLI 1998, RUBAGUMYA 1999, KADEGHE, 2003).

Conversely, those who are opposed to the use of English have taken the angle that English is colonial, imperialist, and thus incapable of serving as a viable vehicle for delivering education in a meaningful way (e.g. MOCHIWA 2001, MASELE 2005). This group holds that, foreign as it is, English is elitist because it caters for only a small fraction of the citizenry, mainly serving the interests of its native speakers. On another note, those who are pro-English feel that English is a useful MoI, and suggest that it has the potential of facilitating education transactions (e.g. KAPOLI 1998, KADEGHE 2003). This group has viewed English as a global language, and paid little attention to the argument that it serves the interests of particular nations. These two camps have also been surfacing in both formal and non-formal dialogues among staff at the University of Dar es Salaam from time to time.

From the early days of independence, the Government of Tanzania preferred the use of Swahili in government activities, including education (specifically in primary education). Even before independence, the Tanganyika African National Union (TANU) made a proposition in 1954 that Swahili be made the second language in the Legislative Council's meetings (TANU 1954: 5). Furthermore, in the early 1960s when Tanganyika became independent, one urgent issue was to change the MoI from English to Swahili. Consequently, starting from late 1960s to mid-1970s, the use of English in public spaces was looked at with disdain, and it was even referred to as *kasumba ya kikoloni* (colonial hangover) (TRAPPES-LOMAX 1985: 12; MAPUNDA 2015: 37). For example, in 1964 the then Second Vice-president, Rashidi Kawawa, instructed public offices not to use English, if it was not necessary. In 1967, Kawawa also revisited his instruction:

> "The Government has made a decision that as from now Swahili shall be used in all government transactions, and the practice of using English or any other foreign language should cease forthwith, except if unavoidable." (*BAKITA* 1970, 1; our translation)

More recently, language activists, such as some academics, politicians and partisans, have taken the lead in seeing to it that the changeover from English to Swahili becomes a reality; and whoever is pro-English is viewed as an apostate. However, almost six decades have passed since the Government of Tanzania wanted a radical change in the use of Swahili as a MoI, and yet the Government is still indecisive and ambivalent on a clear and fine-grained language-in-education policy for all levels of education. It is within this context this indecisiveness and ambivalence that the question of which language should be used as the MoI in Tanzania is being revisited now.

2. Overview of the use of Swahili and English

Swahili and English languages have co-existed in Tanzania's education since the onset of British colonialism. Since part of this story has already been explained in the introduction section, in this part we will talk briefly about their ecological co-existence. To begin with, Swahili was preferred by the Germans, and then by the British, and later on by the independence government (CAMERON and DODD 1970, BARRETT 2014). After independence in 1961, more efforts were made by the Government. For example, according to HILL (1980: 368-369), Swahili was used as the MoI for adult education even in areas where the language was not spoken by the community. Many educational books were published in Swahili; and the Institute of Kiswahili[1] Research and the Tanzania Council for Kiswahili worked hard to coin vocabulary for educational purposes. Educational radio programmes were also aired in Swahili.

The Government was aware that Swahili was not known throughout the country, and so adult education was also used by the Government as a forum for teaching it. Writing for UNESCO, VISCUSI (1971: 10) observes that the Tanzanian Government made efforts which were commended:

> "For those rural Tanzanians who have never attended school, the government looks to adult literacy classes as a means of helping to establish Swahili as a true national tongue. For some of these people, therefore, becoming literate also means acquiring or perfecting a second language (which is Swahili)."

English started to be used in the education system after 1918 when the Germans lost the First World War to the British. It started to be used as the MoI in the last three years of primary education and throughout secondary education (Barrett 2014: 4). After independence, secondary and post-secondary education still retained English as the MoI, even though attempts were underway to eventually replace it by Swahili. For example, in 1969 the Ministry of National Education sent a circular to all headmasters and headmistresses of all secondary schools in Tanzania regarding the possibility of introducing Swahili as the MoI in secondary schools in at least some subjects. The circular suggested that political education could be taught in Swahili starting from 1969/70, and domestic science in 1970.

Other actors also made several attempts to discourage the use of English, and the National Council for Kiswahili (1970) was among them. In 1967 the Government adopted the use of Swahili as an exclusive MoI in primary education. Following this movement to uphold Swahili, it became apparent, in the words of those

[1] The prefix *ki-* is often used in referring to the language; but in this article we prefer to call the language Swahili.

whom I may call language purists, the standard[2] of English in the country deteriorated. Remarking on his personal experience, ISHUMI (2004: 13), for example, observes that

> "The English spoken today by our students, and hence by their teachers, is no longer the impeccable English that was practiced in the classrooms and in the corridors of the institutions of the early years of the independence period. The same can be said of the wider population outside the walls of institutions."

An often quoted report on the situation of the English language in Tanzania by CRIPER and DODD (1984) also noted that the teachers themselves, both degree and diploma graduates, had problems with the English language. They noted that the use of English in the schools was very minimal, something that needed redressing (CRIPER and DODD 1984: 36).

To date, there is still no indication that Tanzania will do away with English as a MoI in secondary and post-secondary education. In 1969, Harries noted the ambivalence in the language policy. He said, "There is no active opposition towards the use of English by the authorities, but rather a positive commitment to promote the use of Swahili as widely as possible. No special or extraordinary steps are taken to promote the use of English, but the further use of Swahili is encouraged" (HARRIES 1969: 278). This endless ambivalence has given an indecisive decision in regard to the Swahili-English debate. Nyerere, president of Tanzania (1962-1985), defended the use of English in education, arguing that Tanzania still needed the support of the rest of the world due to its economic woes (RUBAGUMYA 1990: 27, BARRETT 2014: 7). Government ambivalence was also shown in the 1980s when Nyerere, the president of Tanzania then, set a presidential commission to study the state of education in Tanzania, headed by Jackson Makweta. When their report came out in February 1982, they recommended a changeover of the MoI from English to Swahili at secondary and later post-secondary levels.

Interestingly, in 1984 the Ministry of Education issued a statement, saying that both English and Swahili would still be used as a MoI, and that the teaching of English would be further improved. Additionally, the President made it even more explicit that English was still important and Tanzanians needed it. In a statement quoted in *Mzalendo* newspaper (owned and run by the ruling party – *Chama cha Mapinduzi*) on 28 October 1984, Nyerere used very strong words, "It is wrong to leave English to die. To reject English is foolishness, not patriotism"

[2] This deterioration is in comparison to the level of mastery during the days when English was taught by native speakers before independence.

and so "English will be the medium of instruction in secondary schools and institutions of higher education, because if it is left as only a normal subject it may die". This background information suggests that there is a need to look into the MoI debate in a better way.

3. Arguments for and against the use of English

The feeling that Swahili should replace English emerges mostly within findings from the library research which we conducted. There are several arguments in the literature that propose the replacement of English by Swahili in the Tanzania's education system. The arguments can be categorized as weaknesses in the use of English, nationalist arguments, and monolingual tendencies in education. These are presented in the next sub-sections.

Weaknesses in the use of English

What is apparent in Tanzania's educational institutions is a general weakness in the mastery of the English language by students, but also by teachers. In universities, for example, a study by MAPUNDA and MAFU (2014) which involved 450 first year students from the Universities of Dar es Salaam (UDSM), Sokoine (SUA) and Tumaini - Iringa (TUICO), in which students were required to write essays on a common topic, identified a number of consistent weaknesses in the mastery of English. The errors included transfer of concepts from Swahili, wrong choice of words and translating directly from Swahili, rampant spelling errors, rule overgeneralization, wrong use of adjectives, and vague expressions.

Also, from the mass media, a number of complaints have been written about. One example is by MAKUMBA (6 August 2010) who reported in the *Business Times* about a concern by a Tigo Human Resource Officer, who complained about the weaknesses of Tanzanian graduates who applied to Tigo for jobs. She noted that Tanzanian graduates (both secondary and post-secondary) have poor communication skills, especially when it comes to the use of the English language, which was evident in almost every interview in which she participated.

Nationalist arguments

Many arguments against the use of English as the MoI are based on nationalist arguments, even though on the surface they may sound pedagogical. MAZRUI (1992) makes an important remark as to why English is rejected in post-colonial Africa, including Tanzania. He argues that the rejection of English can be an expression of nationalist sentiments. The fact that the language was associated with the brutality associated with colonialism and enslavement, and also that in

the beginning it was accessible only to a selected few, has engendered ill-feeling against it. Thus, the need to replace English by Swahili comes about because of

> "[…] (Europeans') brutal and humiliating experiences of enslavement and colonization. As a result, the nationalist sentiments towards Kiswahili were bound to involve a rejection of any seemingly negative projection of the language which may have been engendered by colonial discourse." (MAZRUI 1992: 89).

ROY-CAMPBELL and QORRO (1997) are among the scholars who have strongly argued against the use of English in education in Tanzania. In their book titled "Language crisis in Tanzania", the authors argue against the use of a *foreign* language in Tanzania's education. A quote from their book suggests that a foreign language should not be used in Tanzania's education system:

> "Why should cultural and moral values, customs and traditions be learnt through the medium of English, a foreign language? This is tantamount to suggesting to the students that their background is inadequate and of little value." (ROY-CAMPBELL and QORRO 1997: 78-79)

MZEE (1995) also suggests that using a foreign language is like nurturing colonialism. In which case, the problem may not be that the language cannot fulfil certain sociopolitical functions, but that because of its colonial background it is not acceptable.

> "In an attempt to counter campaigns, run by foreign newspapers against efforts by the Tanzanian people to liberate themselves from colonialism, and finding their own development, the TANU Party (at that time) decided to launch its own newspaper called *Sauti ya TANU* (Voice of TANU) which was published in Swahili; it did a lot to educate the citizenry about TANU politics." (Our translation from the original Swahili version)

Furthermore, other scholars have linked the continued use of English to class formation in society. One such example is MALEKELA (2003: 110) who argues that "The continued use of English as a medium of instruction in post-primary education is meant to boost the status or prestige of a few who have inferiority complex towards our national language, Kiswahili". In a further criticism of English, CHACHAGE (2004) has likened the use of English in Tanzania to the propagation of cultures of other nations, and particularly those of the economically powerful nations.

Monolingual tendencies

It has been observed that teachers and students who have been codeswitching between English and Swahili are regarded as doing the wrong thing. They have been viewed as incapable of sustaining the process of teaching/learning in English. An example of this is from ROY-CAMPBELL and QORRO (1997: 61), who hold that, "If more than half of the respondents admit that they sometimes ask the teacher questions in Kiswahili when in class, then the students' commitment to English can be called into question". For them, it is a weakness of the students to ask questions in Swahili.

This view is also held by MOCHIWA (2001), MALEKELA (2005), and MASELE (2005). MOCHIWA (2001:5), for example, has argued that the use of English in education is a hindrance: "English continues to impede communication between teachers and students, so the development of the child's brain does not get an opportunity to develop". Thus, for these people, the immediate solution is for English to be replaced.

4. Theoretical basis

We approach the debate on the MoI in Tanzania from a translanguaging perspective as an alternative lens which can help iron out the dilemma of which language should be used or which language should replace another language in an education system. For GARCÍA and WEI (2014: 2) translanguaging is

> "an approach to the use of language, bilingualism and the education of bilinguals that considers the language practices of bilinguals not as two autonomous languages [or more] systems as has been traditionally the case, but as one linguistic repertoire with features that have been societally constructed as belonging to two separate languages."

They also view translanguaging as being capable of looking "at linguistic realities of the world today and how human beings use their linguistic knowledge holistically to function as language users and social actors", not as language users who operate according to some policy imperative.

The history of translanguaging can be traced back to Welsh classrooms in the 1980s. It was found that when learners were allowed to freely interchange between English and Welsh (WEI 2018: 15) their learning experiences became even more successful.

The ideas that underlie translanguaging also find support in the works of LANZA (2007), MATRAS (2009), and LÜPKE and STORCH (2013), among others, who prefer

the view of language repertoires, as opposed to language systems. For example, MATRAS (2009: 4) argues that bilingual and multilingual speakers

> "have a complex repertoire of linguistic structures at their disposal. This repertoire is not organized in the form of 'language' or 'language systems'. Rather, elements of the repertoire (word-form, phonological rules, constructions, and so on) gradually become associated through a process of linguistic socialization, with a range of social activities."

Besides, LÜPKE and STORCH (2013: 2) posit that, it is counterproductive to think of 'fixed languages or fixed linguistic identities' in multilingual settings. For them, speakers use repertoires; and repertoire choices are determined by 'domains, contexts, addresses, and many other factors'. This is not the same as forcing language users to adopt one particular language and leave out another one. They are not comfortable with the view that one 'named' language operates separately, and so should replace another 'named' language. MATRAS (2009: 9) who is even more critical of the view of languages as linguistic systems, suggests an abandonment of the idea of linguistic systems in favour of linguistic repertoires which consider languages mainly as communication.

Coming back to translanguaging, GARCÍA (2017: 258) holds that the perspective is aware of the linguistic potential that students come into the school with. This potential links them to their past, and at them same time, influences their progression towards acquiring the dominant standard languages, and also makes a way for them to move toward creative languaging that opens up further possibilities of knowledge creation. The main claim of translanguaging is thus the use of two or more languages in multilingual educational settings enables teachers and leaners to transcend language boundaries since multilingual speakers do not operate each language separately; all the codes operate as a unified whole complementing each other.

Another proponent of translanguaging is CANAGARAJAH (2011) who, like the others, is opposed to monolingual tendencies in multilingual settings and feels that there is a need for an "affirmative action" to undo such tendencies. His position is based on the fact that many of the discussions that prevailed in the past about language use in multilingual classrooms focused on the view that the use of more than one language is a weakness. GARCÍA and WEI (2014: 137) argue that "through multiple discursive practices that constitute the language users' linguistic repertoires, translanguaging makes visible the different histories, identities, heritages and ideologies of multilingual language users". However, looking at classroom research on multilingual settings, one almost always encounters arguments that discourage the use of more than one language in the

classroom (e.g. SENKORO 2004: 53; QORRO 2004: 109); thus arguing for one 'named' language replacing another 'named' language. PROBYN (2009) has even shown ironically that bringing into the classroom a language that is not designated by policies to be used as such as tantamount to 'smuggling' into the classroom an illegal language.

It is therefore our conviction that translanguaging can be a feasible alternative to classroom discourses in multilingual contexts. As such, using more than one language in an education system of a multilingual nation concurrently can be well accommodated, and the dilemma of whether or not one language should replace another language will no longer resurface.

5. Methods

In this study, three methods of data collection were used, namely library research, questionnaire, and interview. Through the library research, we consulted journal articles, books, and newspaper articles. The questionnaire was administered to 467 students from four secondary schools in Songea Town, Tanzania.[3] These students are approximately 17-21 years old. For ethical reasons the schools are named here as School1 (in which 162 students participated), School2 (where 81 students participated), School3 (where 92 students participated), and School4 (where 132 students participated). The administration of the questionnaire was meant to collect data on students' language practices, hypothesizing that language practices may provide information on whether or not government's (which are also schools') policies on the MoI align with such practices.

As for the interviews method, two categories of participants were involved. Besides, two reasons prompted their use. For the students' interviews the goal was to get descriptive information on the responses from the questionnaire. This first category involved 12 advanced level[4] secondary school students from three schools in Songea Town (School1, School2, and School3). These same students had participated in filling the questionnaire, which had also been filled by the 467 students. The second category involved ten (10)[5] high ranking executives

[3] This was part of a larger study on language attitudes and youth identities.

[4] According to Tanzania's education system, primary school takes seven years, general certificate level of secondary education four years, and advanced level of secondary education takes two years. At the advanced level, students specialise in specific subject combinations according to their pass grades at the general certificate level.

[5] These are part of a larger project commissioned by the Tanzania Commission for Universities (TCU). I am grateful to the TCU for allowing me to use these data.

from Government ministries (Foreign Affairs, Works, and Labour), four university vice-chancellors (from two private, and two public universities), a country-level official in a multinational communication and financial company, a top official from the Tanzania Private Sector Forum, and an executive from the Public Service Commission. The reason for holding interviews with these officials is a utilitarian one: to get their opinions on whether or not it is important to make a changeover from English to Swahili MoI in Tanzania's secondary and post-secondary levels of education.

Interviews with students were held in three public secondary schools located in Songea Town, in south-western Tanzania, in vacant classrooms which were made available to us. These were from School1 (which admits only boys); School2 (which admits only girls) and School3 (which admits both boys and girls at the general certificate level, and only girls at the advanced level). Interviews with the various senior officials were held in their offices, some in Dar es Salaam Region and some in Morogoro Region.

6. Findings

In this section we present findings based on each of the two research questions which the study set out to address. The data are therefore presented according to the research questions, but also in line with particular data collection methods.

6.1 Derailment of changeover from English to Swahili

It has now become apparent that a changeover from English to Swahili is taking a long time, and maybe it may take even longer. This will be shown in the following sub-sections with data from questionnaires and interviews.

Findings from the questionnaire

We administered a questionnaire to 467 secondary school students, probing into matters of students' language practices, focusing on English, Swahili and ethnic language in the Ruvuma Region, Tanzania. Secondary school students are normally in the range of 14-17 years for the general certificate level, and 18-20 for those at the advanced level. In this study we are reporting findings on three questions, namely (i) *Which language do you speak with your teachers at the school, but outside the classroom?* (ii) *Do you think that you will work in Tanzania or abroad in the future?* and (iii) *Which language do you think will give you the best working opportunities?* In answering question (i) (which language they usually speak with their teachers at the school, but outside the classroom), we found that 329 (70.4%) speak Swahili, 124 (26.6%) speak English, and only 14

(3%) speak an ethnic language. However, even though Swahili was the language most spoken with teachers outside the classroom, their attitude to the language was quite the opposite. Regarding the second question (ii), that is, where they would like to work in the future, out of the 467 participants, 313 (67%) will work outside Tanzania, while only 154 (33%) will work locally. As to question (iii) (which language they think would give them the best working opportunities in the future), 83.9 per cent chose English, while only 15 per cent chose Swahili and 0.2 chose ethnic languages. Thus, their imagined future work place, and which language would facilitate their imagination match. These findings suggest that even some of those who wish to work in Tanzania still think that English is more promising than Swahili.

Findings from students' interviews

The findings from the interviews are from 12 advanced level secondary school students from School1, School2 and School3. The main interview question asked to the students was about the relative amount of time they spent learning the languages (English, Swahili, or an ethnic language) and their reasons for doing so. First, out of the 12 students, nine spend more time learning English because English carries more material and symbolic value for their future, while the remaining three spend more time learning Swahili. Those who attach more value to English have friends outside Tanzania, want to learn fashion from the internet, which is in English, want to become lawyers and soldiers; and some want to live outside Tanzania, and particularly in Uganda, South Africa and the USA.

Another reason for attaching more value to English is that examinations in Tanzanian secondary schools are given in English; and if they want to do well, then they need to master English well. Some of them want to pursue further education abroad, and scholarships are given to those with good examination grades; and these will be those who have mastered the English language. Yet for some, speaking English is prestigious in their communities. Amina[6] (female, School1, studies arts subjects, Form VI) will be self-employed, and for her, Swahili may help her; but it is English that would provide more opportunities for her. She said, "I want to become an interpreter-cum-translator, but what I need more is English. It is English which will give me another language to become what I want". Also, Rose (female, School3, studies science subjects, Form VI) works hard to master English because she does not see the necessity of spending time learning Swahili, which she already knows: "I already know Swahili, so I need to learn English. After all, Swahili is useful only for communication with the

[6] All the names used here are pseudonyms for ethical reasons.

local people. For me, what is more important and useful is English". Rose also feels that employment is mostly provided by foreign investors, for whom, knowledge of English is more valued than Swahili. For Teddy (female, School3, studies arts subjects, Form VI), Swahili is useful only to a small extent: "I think Swahili may help me, to a small extent, but I am not even sure how. I want to become a university lecturer, and I think it is English which will help me". Peter (male, School 2, studies arts, Form V) wants to become a teacher in an English medium school, and thinks that he needs to become better in English.

Interestingly, three out of the nine interviewees think that for them Swahili carries their future. One of them is John (male, School2, studies science subjects, Form V) who wants to become a Swahili language teacher, and spends a lot of time learning Swahili. However, he also thinks that English is more important, "One cannot become a teacher with only one language". As such, he needs to spend more time learning English. In the future, he also wants to write Swahili books and sell them; and yet he invests more efforts in learning English. Also, Mary (female, School 3, studies arts subjects, Form V) is the only participant who does not subscribe to the view that English will help her; and for her, Swahili is more important, "I want to become a Swahili teacher or professor, and there aren't many experts in Swahili. I want to become one; and Swahili is my future hope". For Mary, the usefulness of English is only when she comes across those who do not speak Swahili. Also, for the other students who have more regard for Swahili, their reasons include the fact that they have no intention to go and work abroad; Swahili was becoming more and more popular within and outside Tanzania, so there is assurance of employment; and they did not have an opportunity to learn English well while still in primary school.

Findings from senior officials' interviews

Interviews with high level officials in governmental and non-governmental sectors focused on the usefulness of English to their organization, and what would be the consequences of the Government adopting a Swahili-only policy in the education system.

All their responses were related in many ways. For example, Participant1 (works in the Ministry of Works, Transport and Communication) is of the view that, the kind of university graduates whom they need, should have English language skills, particularly interview skills, self-expression, organization of thoughts, report writing, and communication skills in general. This was also a concern by Participant2 (works for a multinational communication and financial company)

who also valued the skills of organization, marketing, and sustaining a point of view.

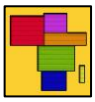
In the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Participant3 was of the view that language skills, both English and Swahili, are highly needed in their Ministry because they interact with internationals on a daily basis. She also argued that those with good mastery of English are advantaged, "Those who studied abroad, or in English medium primary schools are in a better position in most cases. During interviews, most of them cannot express themselves, and they cannot write reports well". In addition, all the university vice-chancellors held the same view that the English language is important at the university level. To be more specific, Participant5 (works with University1, Public) even recommends that there should be a compulsory English language course throughout university schooling:

> "English language skills are highly needed at this level. More importantly, the soft skills are lacking. In fact, there should be a compulsory credited English course for all students all the way from the first year. The nation needs English to reach the middle income level status."

Participant6 (University2, Private) lamented that students at his university do not value English, which he sees as being very important. He saw that there was a growing tendency at his university to view English as imposed and colonial. He proposed that there be a sensitization campaign for students to be willing, proud, and motivated to learn and master English as a tool for employment. There is a need for continuous English courses for all students. Participant7 (University3, Private) underscored the relevance of English but lamented that mastery of the language by the public is very poor, and that, when they introduced an entry examination at his university, 200 of the applicants failed.

7. Discussion of the findings

In this section we discuss the findings in the order of the research questions. The first question asks why there has been a feeling that Swahili should replace English. From the findings, it has been observed that those who have taken part in the debate have tended to associate nationalist feelings and the thinking that monolingual policies in education work better. Deep down, they uphold the liberation role played by Swahili during the fight against colonial oppression, and ignore the usefulness of the English language in productive sectors, including education. MAZRUI (1992: 88) made an important remark on this issue:



> "Many Africans developed strong nationalistic sentiments towards Kiswahili, seeing it as a language of national sovereignty, as a possible symbol of transnational and continental unity, and as a reminder of the common origins of African descent now scattered throughout the globe [world]."

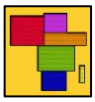
Also, looking at the current situation through the lens of Translanguaging Theory, we may need to think about classroom languaging not on the basis of its history in Tanzanian schools, or even whether English was a foreign or imperial language, but rather, in terms of knowledge construction and sharing. We should go beyond thinking of languages as separate codes. WEI and LIN (2019: 211-212) have argued that:

> "When we talk about the classroom, we tend to have an immediate image of a confined physical space with specified and often hierarchical role sets and planned learning objectives and tasks. Translanguaging classroom discourse is not only about encouraging fluid multilingual practices within the limits and boundaries set up by these role sets, objectives and tasks, but to aim at challenging and transforming them."

As such, when classrooms allow the use of multiple cultural resources, learning becomes active, interesting, and transformative. It is at this point that GARCÍA and WEI (2014) and LANZA (2007), among others, are opposed to segregating linguistic systems because bilinguals/multilinguals automatically transcend linguistic system boundaries when they communicate. When we want to create global citizens, we should not think in terms of fragmenting our education systems in terms of one language replacing another language, but rather different linguistic and extra-linguistic resources working together to produce graduates who can appreciate diversity.

Arguments like the colonial past and foreignness given in support of eventual replacement of English by Swahili in the education system are not sufficiently convincing. It is not foreignness or even colonial background that matter, but the promise that a language carries with it. Chinese is a more recent example of a foreign language which is currently gaining students' attention in Tanzanian. SCHMIED (1986) was surprised to see that, in the Department of Foreign Languages and Linguistics (University of Dar es Salaam), it was French and not English, which attracted more attention among students. But there was a material incentive for this:

> "Another, perhaps surprising, fact is that among students at the Department of Foreign Languages and Linguistics French seems to be a more popular subject than English. This can be attributed to dreams about a career in the diplomatic service or to the study term spent abroad (formerly in France, now "only" in Burundi or Madagascar)." (SCHMIED 1986: 89)



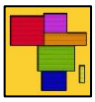
While emphasis has been on Swahili replacing English, some scholars are aware of possible consequences of overhauling the MoI status quo. ROY-CAMPBELL and QORRO (1997) and RUBAGUMYA (1999) are among them. For example, RUBAGUMYA (1999: 138-139) is critical of the desire for a radical overhaul, but at the same time maintains that an overhaul should have been the more logical option. This dilemma is partly due to the thinking that one language should replace another one, a situation that will almost always trigger a dilemma.

Indeed, what is apparent in this discussion is that it is not the English language itself which is the problem; the problem lies beyond the bounds of the language factor. Even the often-quoted Makweta's report (*Jamhuri Ya Muungano Wa Tanzania (JMT)*, 1982), which recommended a changeover from English to Swahili, did not see the problem as being exclusively the use of English. In fact, the report observes that there are problems with the teaching of both English and Swahili. To be exact, this is what the report says:

> "Students at various levels of education are unable to advance themselves in English or Swahili. This problem has been caused by scarcity of facilities and insufficiency of good language teachers, students not being encouraged to learn foreign languages, and not getting sufficient time to practice speaking foreign languages because of fear that results from fear that they would be seen as having *kasumba ya ukoloni* (colonial hangover)." (Our translation from Swahili)

Some of the arguments provided even by those who support the eventual replacement of English, have talked about Swahili as a commodity, that it should also be used across Africa, and in other parts of the world. There is, in addition, the question of fluency in Swahili in remote rural Tanzania. They do not even talk about the denial of children of the benefits of learning in their own ethnic languages in education in their early school years (MAPUNDA 2013). They have from time to time argued that Swahili is a Bantu language, thus it is known within a short time. However, the truth is that many children in remote rural Tanzania do not speak Swahili before they start school (VISCUSI 1971: 10, MSANJILA 1990: 53), and this is not being discussed as a more serious problem.

It is possibly Ngugi who convincingly summarises the debate by calling for a triple language policy with a view to decolonising the African mind, "Mother tongue, *lingua franca*, and then French or English or whatever. That is how we are going to decolonise Africa because that also creates an attitude" (KHELEF 2018).



8. Conclusion

The chapter has shown that the debate on whether or not Swahili should replace English as a MoI in Tanzania's secondary and post-secondary education after independence is based on both its colonial history and its pedagogical potential (or lack of it). The literature on this question describes the situation of how English was before and immediately after independence. We also know that, to date, those schools which have sufficiently invested in teaching English and other subjects, have been able to make their students and teachers able to use English in the classrooms.

While it is true that English was introduced during colonialism, this colonial relationship does not remain as such forever. The colonial masters have gone, but the English language has remained, and Tanzania should make use of it. The importance of having English well mastered is in the interest of the nations which use it. It is against this background that even some countries which have never been colonized by Britain, such as Ethiopia and Rwanda, have willingly opted to use English in their education systems.

A further conclusion relates to the reason why the changeover from English to Swahili has not yet taken place. Speaking from a pragmatic point of view, the youth have heard of the woes of colonial brutality, but they do not have first-hand feeling and experience. It is logical for them to take an interest in their future, and not cling so much to their country's pasts, which they have not even lived or experienced. For the youth, it is not the English language that hinders their development, but how resources are managed and shared. For many, and particularly those who will be employed, their future hope lies mostly in the hands of the private sector for employment, which is mostly dominated by foreign companies. It is more plausible for them to think that English is among the tools that might help them hope to realize their imagined futures.

On another note, even staunch supporters of a Swahili-only policy covertly attach a lot of value to the English language as an important MoI. For example, it is known that many of such people have themselves sent their children, grandchildren or children of their siblings to English medium primary schools in order to prepare them well for secondary education. It is because of this reality that there is a lot of competition among parents for privately owned English medium primary schools where English is taught well.

In view of what we have argued, it appears doubtful that Swahili shall eventually replace English as the MoI in the near future. This doubt seems plausible because of the fact that now both Swahili and English have become even more relevant, and stakeholders see value in both. In 2021 UNESCO proclaimed Swahili one of

the world languages, and has also become one of the languages of the African Union, and of the East African Community as well. Many countries in Africa and outside Africa have shown interest in learning it. As for English, most job opportunities are through the private sector; and mostly foreign. For these reasons, students and parents have divided opinions about the value of these languages. Among those who have expressed doubt about a complete changeover from English to Swahili is TRAPPES-LOMAX (1985: 13), who did it more than 40 years ago. Furthermore, more than 30 years ago, RUBAGUMYA (1998: 88) wrote in his two-page article that changeover from English to Swahili "might not happen for another 5, 10, 20 years (?) depending on how policy makers are determined to delay it". We suppose the question mark meant much longer than 20 years. To be pragmatic we do not see any changeover happening in the near future, because of the symbolic value attached to the English language. As long as Tanzania's economy is tightly intertwined with the economies of the rest of the world, English is there to stay as a MoI. Our prediction is that, if this changeover is forced, what is likely to happen is that, privately owned schools and institutions which will still use English will have more clients than ever before. What is likely to happen if English is completely removed from the education system, schools in neighboring countries will have an assured market from Tanzanian students.

Finally, with the passing of time, we should not be worried about one language replacing the other. A monolingual approach to education in multilingual situations should be seen as a thing of the past, because it denies learners their desired goal of becoming global citizens. Let two or more languages be allowed to co-exist in the education system; this has the potential of further strengthening education in Tanzania. The focus should now be on proper teacher training and resource mobilization for educational institutions.

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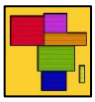

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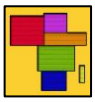

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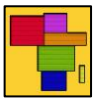

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